

course, our most helpful staff was with us every step of the way—on our side, Lula Davis, and on McCONNELL's side, Dave Schiappa—and we appreciate very much their expertise in this area.

FRANKEN MAIDEN SPEECH

Finally, I wish to say briefly that our newest Senator, AL FRANKEN, gave his maiden speech last night. It was really very good. I was so impressed with how well prepared he was. I was very impressed with how well he delivered the speech. Here is a man who is a Harvard graduate, best-selling author, and entertainer. Now he is a U.S. Senator, and the people of Minnesota are so fortunate. If things work out as I think they will, he will be presiding over the Senate when the historic vote is called today on the new Supreme Court Justice.

HISTORIAN RETIREMENT RECEPTION

Madam President, Senate Historian Dick Baker will be retiring. In honor of his service to the Senate and the Senate community, there will be a reception today from 3:30 to 5:00 in the LBJ Room, S. 211. He is a wonderful scholar, a great writer, and a lecturer, and we are going to miss him very much.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 10 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO MARY JO HOFFMAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this morning a funeral service will be held in Sioux City, IA, for a 44-year-old woman who began working for the people of Iowa in my office in January of 1988. Mary Jo Hoffman was a loyal and trusted adviser to me and a beloved friend to my wife, Barbara, our family, and many of my Senate staff who served with her more than a decade ago and still, in a sense, are serving with her today.

Always filled with purpose, Mary Jo spent the last 2 years 4 months fighting cancer with the tenacity, strength, and determination we all knew and loved about her. When Mary Jo set her mind to something, she didn't let much get in her way. She was that way when I met her when she was a bright young college student at the University of Northern Iowa, my alma mater, and she was that way when she worked effectively to serve constituents, first as a legislative correspondent, then as scheduler and as a top aide in my Senate office, and later on when she worked for my political campaigns. I

valued her judgment and appreciated her hard work and commitment to quality in every position she held. Mary Jo also taught at night as a volunteer and earned a master's degree while working on Capitol Hill.

She reached out and gave to others in so many ways through her church, in her community, and even on the U.S. Air Force base in Greece where she lived for a short period of time with her husband while he was serving. Someone in need had a friend in Mary Jo. She always got a lot done, and she did it in a way that was generous, spirited, and committed to ideals.

Mary Jo was a person of great faith. She provided leadership wherever she went through worship and fellowship and with the example she set with her own life. Mary Jo was a faithful witness for Christ and never more so than the darkest hours and days of her last 2 years. She will continue to inspire those of us who were lucky enough to have her in our lives.

We all mourn Mary Jo's departure, and our heart goes out to her family, including her devoted husband, Brent, and mother, Karen. I know Mary Jo's beautiful young children, Silas and Lydia, will miss her every day. I pray that they find comfort in the honorable life lived by their mother and my dear friend Mary Jo. She served the people of Iowa and the Lord with distinction and humility. She left this world for the next with courage and grace.

I wish to read one sentence from the Sioux City Journal which I think sums up her life: "Her words were like thunder because her life was like lightning."

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have the full text printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Sioux City Journal, Aug. 4, 2009]

MARY JO HOFFMAN

SIoux CITY.—Mary Jo Hoffman, 44, passed on to heaven on July 31, 2009, having lived life well and faithfully. She leaves a timeless legacy of faith and love for family and friends. Her words were like thunder because her life was like lightning.

Memorial services will be 11 a.m. Thursday at Heartland Community Baptist Church, 3601 Country Club Blvd., Sioux City, with the Rev. Gene Stockton officiating. A luncheon will follow the memorial service. Burial will be at a later date in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C. Visitation with the family will be 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at Meyer Brothers Colonial Chapel. Condolences may be sent online to www.meyerbroschapels.com.

Born in Centerville, Iowa, on April 5, 1965, Mary Jo was a precocious student and musician, graduating as class salutatorian from Chariton (Iowa) High School in 1983. She adored her family and friends.

She received her bachelor of arts degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 1987, graduating with high honors. During a distinguished career, she put her faith in action through teaching and public service. She worked on Capitol Hill for many years, serving proudly on the staff of Senator Chuck Grassley. She also earned a master of arts

degree from George Mason University in Arlington, Va.

While living in Virginia and attending First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Mary Jo (Archibold) met and married Brent Hoffman. She joined Brent on military assignments in Greece and at the Pentagon. Their children, Silas and Lydia were born in 2000 and 2002, and she promptly set all career plans and ambitions aside. In 2004, they returned to their native Iowa and Sioux City. Though she maintained interests in fundraising and community service, she was a mother who put her family's needs first and foremost. She enjoyed reading, music, cooking, politics, knitting and most of all, visiting with friends and family.

Though admired for her extraordinary achievements, she was beloved for her faith and kindness. She accepted Christ as her Savior and her faith in God was the driving purpose in her life. Friends describe Mary Jo as a bright shining light who lived a life pleasing to God. Her influence will not be forgotten.

Survivors include her children, Silas and Lydia; her husband, Brent; her parents, Ron and Karen Stein of Mason City, Iowa; a sister, Malinda Hilzer of Des Moines; and many other relatives, all of whom she loved and are left to cherish her memory.

She was preceded in death by her father, D.W. Archibold; and her grandparents.

A memorial has been established in the name of Mary Jo Hoffman at Heartland Community Baptist Church.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time between now and 10 o'clock be distributed as follows: 5 minutes for Senator ALEXANDER and then the rest of the time be equally divided between Senator DURBIN and myself.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, the White House, the Congress, and the American people are engaged in a stark debate over our Nation's health care insurance system. A lot is at stake. We will make a choice in 2009, and that choice will determine the health care system we have in our Nation for a long time to come.

Fifteen years have passed since we last attempted to pass health care reform. What we do now will be consequential for decades to come. It will be a long time before the people of this country and their leaders will return to this complex and contentious issue.

So let us carefully review the potential plans. We have a plan being developed by the House of Representatives, we have a plan from the Senate HELP Committee, and a plan from the Finance Committee, we have the bipartisan Wyden-Bennett plan, and then we have a plan I am going to spend a lot of time talking about, and that is the PHS plan.

In listening to my colleagues speak on the floor of the Senate, on television, talk radio, in newspapers, and in private meetings, one thing is clear: